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241 not practical knowledge applied from our point of view; it must be from
177 their point of view. Instruction must be articulated with their practices and techniques; it must take into account their arrangements and their rhythm of life. The knowledge imparted must be applicable to their conditions and be linked with the instruments at their disposal. For the dietician to extol the virtues of a new crop, for the doctor to show that bacteria more readily enter where resistance is lowered by deficiencies in food, even for the agricultural demonstrator using his superior implements to demonstrate the practicability of the crop—all this is very nearly fruitless. These things will have their value when they can be fitted into the Native's world of thought and technology. In the meanwhile, the execution of our plans, sound though they be in theory, is merely causing irritation and resistance.

241 All the old Lovedu cultivation was on the hills or along their slopes and,
476 generally speaking, close relatives, not necessarily relatives through
178 males, had all or some of their fields in large blocks (*demo*). Unlike the Tswana custom, these blocks stood in no relation to the social organization; the land was not pointed out by the chief and its size was not predetermined, but depended upon the energy of the individual cultivators. The *demo* was a matter of convenience and utility: the concentration facilitated co-operation in clearing the fields, economized the labour necessary for protecting the gardens, and made mutual assistance in hoeing and weeding much easier. No doubt the arrangements also mobilized incentives and added to the joys of life. There is to-day nothing left of these blocks. The old ones have inevitably fallen into the hands of more and more scattered people and no new ones can be created because large blocks of land are no longer available. The tendency towards dispersal and fragmentation was still further emphasized when Shangana-Tonga cultivation proved the fertility of the valleys. To-day a man must take land where he can find it, and though the Lovedu still live on the hills, they have their lands scattered all over the country. Indeed, since it is easier to plough on level ground, the hills are liable to be neglected, though wisdom dictates that it is best to have fields in two different environments. The result is that a man's fields are widely separated, sometimes being as far as ten miles apart.

241 The old division of labour in agriculture between the sexes was not
462 uneven; both men and women hoed, weeded, and reaped. Only men cleared the forest, but against that only women cultivated certain crops, such as groundnuts. The old pattern is still more or less maintained, at least in principle. But cultivation by the plough has changed matters. Men look upon hoeing as the work of women, although the old ideal so much survives that they despise the Shangana-Tonga because their menfolk neither hoed nor weeded in the past. To-day hoeing and weeding among the Lovedu fall largely upon the women, and ploughing almost exclusively upon the men. This is not a fair division of labour; it might be fairer if the other activities of men, such as hunting and public life, had not become greatly attenuated. For the women are always busy, and their work is more monotonous than that of the men, who, despite the labour migration to the towns, have much more leisure than women.

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More thorough ploughing and a revival of the interest men used to have in agriculture would make the balance swing evenly. A man should not feel, as he tends to do to-day, that he pulls his full weight if he goes out periodically to earn wages, ploughs the fields, discusses cases, and builds huts. He has plenty of time to take a larger part in agriculture, as he did in the old days and as many of the older men still do.

Ploughing has brought about many other changes. It has necessitated clearing of the stumps and stones, and broken down to a large extent the old contour-terracing. This has accelerated erosion, which was in any case inevitable owing to the overstocking, just as overstocking is inevitable, not because men keep many cattle, but because of the density of the population. Erosion impoverishes the soil and over-use exhausts it. The result is that the initial benefits of the plough, which made larger gardens and better cultivation possible, are gradually being turned into liabilities. Every one will tell you that crops are more abundant to-day than in the old days; but the price is already heavy, and as the quality of the soil gets worse it will be increasingly heavier. Variety, the single-crop field, rotation of crops have gone. The planting season is much later and less concentrated in the months of October to December than in the old days, for ploughing is a rapid process as compared with hoeing, and one can avail oneself of good rains even as late as the middle of February. Late ploughing is not always deliberate; the small number of available ploughs and, more serious, the inadequacy of the draught animals, are equally responsible. The distribution of these resources is effected by various forms of co-operation, mostly partnerships in which one supplies labour, another the plough, and still another the cattle or donkeys. These partnerships, though patterned upon old forms of co-operation, have to take account of new factors, economic rather than social, and lead to new alinements in the society. Overstocking and ploughing have contributed to the silting up with useless sand of the old riverside gardens. Their original purpose, which was to tide men over the scarcity in the months November to February, partly fell away when ploughing brought a measure of abundance, but now that the old needs are reasserting themselves these gardens are destroyed. In their place the new Europeanized gardens, irrigated by furrows along the upper stretches of the smaller streams, have arisen, but the incentives that stimulate this new experiment are somewhat different: the gardens are for profit, not for providing an advance crop. The effects of ploughing may be pursued in many directions: it has emphasized the economic as against the purely social value of cattle, at the same time eliminating milk from the diet of adults; it has to some extent militated against husbanding the food resources; it has stimulated excessive drinking of beer; and it has released a large amount of energy for which there is little creative outlet.

For the present, agriculture is in unstable equilibrium. Every adult still has his own field, but the extreme limit of land available for cultivation has been reached. Limitation of stock can no longer ease the situation, as the chief evil is not overstocking but over-population. About 80 per cent. of the entire soil is arable land, at present or in the near past put under cultivation; as much as 80 per cent. of this land is

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in effective check the tendency for people to move away after every quarrel or accusation of witchcraft, villages were not only appreciably larger than to-day but also somewhat differently arranged, with both courtyard and cattle-kraal in the centre. Wherever possible the Sotho build on mountains, which are covered with a rich, loamy soil well suited to cultivation, are less fever-ridden than the valleys, and in the old days afforded better protection against enemies. Indeed, it is not until recent times that the valleys have been opened up even for agriculture. Within the village each married woman generally has two huts, kitchen- and sleeping-hut, while one or more fenced-in sections near the hedge are devoted to the storage of mealies on the cob and beer-making activities.

TRIBAL ECONOMY. The tribes of the Lowveld are predominantly agricultural, possessing on the whole few cattle. Milk, which many adults find nauseating, plays a very minor part in their diet, milk taboos are unknown while the meat sacrifice is rare, beer taking its place. As among Venda and the Sotho of the Highveld, women are not as strictly excluded from contact with cattle as among the Nguni; not only is it common for girls to herd cattle in the absence of boys in town or at the circumcision school, but many women also possess cattle in their own right. While it would be impossible here to give a full account of Lowveld agriculture, it is of interest to enumerate some of its more salient aspects. Men take a considerable part in agricultural activities, every married man having one large field for which he is responsible. But while women plant every kind of crop, men grow and reap only mealies, grain crops, and sugar-cane; pumpkins, beans, ground- and monkey-nuts, &c., are considered as purely a woman's concern. In our area, as elsewhere, these crops are mostly planted together in the same field, mealies predominating in some parts, kaffir-corn or millet being the chief crop in others. Partly as a result of congestion and partly in order to take advantage of differential climatic conditions as between mountain and valley, fields of any one family are generally very widely scattered, being sometimes as much as ten miles apart. Recognition of the food value of various wild fruit trees, such as the morula and wild fig, is shown by the fines attached to cutting them without special permission. An interesting feature

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241 of the agriculture of the more mountainous portions of the Lowveld is the use of terraces, or rather contour walls of stone, for there is no levelling of the ground in between, to prevent excessive washing away of soil. With the absence of men in the towns and the introduction of the plough with subsequent preference for valley cultivation, these contour walls are tending to fall into disuse.

462 [171] Division of labour between the sexes is the same here as among Venda and the Highveld tribes of the Northern Transvaal. While care of cattle is the province of men and agricultural work is done by both sexes, cooking and housekeeping is confined to women. Men are responsible for the erection of storage receptacles, renewal of pantry and village enclosures and the lion's share in hut-building, including thatching, for women do only plastering of walls and preparation of the floor. The crafts confined to men are ironwork, work in skin, and all wood-work such as the manufacture of drums, platters, spoons, milk pails, stamping blocks, porridge twirlers, and flat winnowing baskets. Pottery is confined to women, but weaving and basketry (other than the making of winnowing baskets) is done by both sexes.

642 643 Political Organization and Position of the Chief. The most outstanding features of the Lobedu culture complex, which clearly differentiate the Lowveld tribes from their neighbours to the south and west, are ritual suicide of the chief and the possibility of women ruling in their own right.[1] Among the Lobedu the chief reigns for a period of four circumcision schools, each 'school' being separated from the previous one by a period of almost ten years, and then has to drink poison and die. The institution can hardly continue when its supporting background of ritual and belief is crumbling, but it has survived to this day; the immediate predecessors of the present Lobedu and Letswalo rulers died unnatural deaths in the traditional manner, Modjadji II in 1894 and Mamathola in 1905. There is in this area no conscious belief that growth of the crops, welfare of the cattle,

[184] [1] These two features occur together in the most important tribes of the Lowveld such as the Lobedu, Khaha, Narene, Thabina. The only tribes to whom this institution is foreign are the Phalaborwa and Tsubye and the two Venda tribes of Moila and Tswale. Sekhopo and Radwadu, sections of the Balobedu, broke away when the first woman succeeded and themselves have only men rulers.

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LOBEDU PROPERTY, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Though women do most of the cultivation, the Lobedu husband is expected to play his part in producing food for his family. Every married man, therefore, has a field of his own which he cultivates with the help of his wives. The produce of this field is used for any beer- or work-parties that the man may wish to give and is a kind of bank upon which his wives may draw when they run short. If, however, a man helps one wife from his personal stores he must give all his wives an equal amount irrespective of their needs. When he first marries, the husband works with his wife in their common field. On marrying a second wife he acquires a field of his own (in addition to the one for his new wife) which his wives take it in turn to weed. It is said that if he had no field of his own but were merely to help each wife in turn to cultivate her field there would be endless trouble in maintaining equality between them. One of them for instance might say, 'How is it that when you come and work in my field you just sit but when you go to the field of the mother of So and So even the shade doesn't tempt you!'

A father is responsible for helping his sons to marry. But since a man seldom possesses cattle other than those already involved in bride-price exchange and a son uses the cattle of his sister, boys in a 'house' in which there are no girls often have to go out and work or with the help and advice of their father acquire bride-price in other ways. In the old days an orphan usually hired out his services to carry salt or iron ore from far countries in order in this way to acquire marriage hoes or cattle. Expenses in goats and money over and above the cattle given in marriage are met by the boy himself with the help of his father. A father should see to it that his son is provided with a field when he marries but in practice it is very often the mother who concerns herself with this problem. The father has jural control over his sons and is responsible for their debts.

The wives in a polygynous household differ in status. The chief wife is the daughter of the mother's brother—the cattle-linked or any uterine mother's brother or mother's half-brother. She will bear the heir and future head of the village. Where there has been no marriage with the mother's brother's daughter it is the first wife, the one married with his father's cattle that is chief wife. A chief wife exercises no control over

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such a quarrel involves the mother rather than the son and the whole house hives off, the son taking his mother with him.

The birth of the first child is an important step in the development of a house. The Lobedu child is born in a homestead in which there are at least three generations represented—that of the grandmother, that of the parents, including usually also the father's brothers and unmarried sisters and that of his own contemporaries. The first child is tended largely by the father's mother while the mother goes about the hard work of stamping, working in the fields, fetching firewood if there are no young sisters of the husband to help, and cooking.

The husband's mother is an essential part of the household and has a dominating influence. She controls and advises her son, especially in regard to his relations with his wife and the needs of his children, and he usually defers to her knowledge and experience. Long after her sons are married and even when they have grandchildren the unit is known as her *mosha* (house). It would seem that a unit of husband, wife and child would hardly be viable in a subsistence economy based predominantly on the agricultural activities of the women. Even the smallest Lobedu homestead includes the husband's mother. It is only when there are several adolescent children or the cash earnings of the husband enable a wife to buy the staple food instead of relying wholly upon what she grows herself that smaller units can survive. Even then they generally live near, and attach themselves to, some relative.

Once children are born, the wife's brother (mother's brother to the children) begins to play a part in forging links between them and the relatives on the mother's side. He will give gifts to the sister's son (*muduhulu*) who often goes to stay for a while with his mother's people; and in his turn the sister's son whenever he returns from migrant labour will be expected to give a gift to his mother's brother. Sometimes he also helps a mother's brother with cattle to marry. As the size of a man's family increases more fields may be needed to feed the children and very often these are obtained by the wife from her own people.

The marriage of the first daughter brings about the first acquisition by the developing house of a large amount of property in bride-price and ensures, even in the absence of sons, the continuation of the house. As important is the fact